

Control Numbers on Ballots

Florida statute 1S-2.032 “Uniform Design for Election Ballots” under section 10(c) “Ballot layout” allows for “control numbers” to be on ballots to “be used for later reconciliation of ballots.” Control numbers (essentially serial numbers) on ballots would provide a myriad of security features such as detection of unauthorized ballots, duplicated ballots and improperly adjudicated ballots, to name a few. Control numbered ballots also greatly facilitate ballot auditing with the unique advantage of a voter being able to verify their own ballot count post-election.

Surprisingly though, Supervisors of Elections (SOE) do not implement this security feature on their ballot layouts. Common concerns are the preserving voter privacy and the extra cost and time to print and count the ballots. However, both of these concerns can be easily addressed. The voter privacy concern can be addressed by simply using on an extra blank security envelope. The only extra cost to adding a control number to a ballot is a small printing cost and the time to open a second envelope. The ballot scanner would automatically record the control number at the same time it is recording the ballot. A computer database stores all the ballot images and a summary of all ballot numbers and the voting record of each individual ballot.